



September 28, 2006

TO: Transportation Authority of Marin Commissioners

FROM: Dianne Steinhauser, Executive Director

RE: Canal Community Based Transportation Plan, Agenda Item 7

Dear Commissioners:

Executive Summary

Over the past year, TAM staff and its consultant team from Wilbur Smith Associates worked closely with City of San Rafael staff on the Canal Neighborhood Community Based Transportation Plan to identify transportation issues and prioritize solutions to overcome them in the Canal Neighborhood. Funding was in part provided by a \$60,000 grant from MTC. This outreach-intensive process included three Stakeholder Committee meetings and two well-attended Open Houses. The plan includes 13 projects, 6 of which are considered "High Priority" by the community members. Involving agency representatives from the beginning of the process allowed several of the high priority issues to be addressed by the respective agency, such as changes to the local transit service in the Canal that were implemented through the adoption of MCTD's Local Service Plan in May 2006 with changes addressing the issues starting in mid-September, 2006. The San Rafael City Council accepted the Plan at their regular meeting of September 18, 2006. Once accepted by the TAM Board, staff from the City and TAM will focus their efforts on implementing priority improvements that best meet the needs of the community.

Recommendation: that the TAM Board accepts the Canal Neighborhood Community-Based Transportation Plan, with special thanks to the Stakeholder Committee who enabled the process to go smoothly.

In May 2005 the Transportation Authority of Marin (TAM) received a grant of \$60,000 from the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) to conduct a community-based transportation planning process with the Canal Neighborhood. The plan was a collaborative project between TAM and City of San Rafael staff.

In September 2005, the San Rafael City Council appointed members to serve on the Canal Stakeholder Committee. The charge of the Stakeholder Committee was to:

- Recommend revisions to the "Lifeline Transit Routes" for the Canal Neighborhood
- Prioritize transportation issues in the Canal Neighborhood
- Identify needed additional bus services
- Identify other needed transportation improvements

The Stakeholder Committee met three times, and held two well-attended Open House events. The committee members worked diligently and conscientiously to create a Transportation Plan to guide circulation improvements in the Canal neighborhood.

The Canal Neighborhood Community-Based Transportation Plan received a positive endorsement by all but one Committee member (Maria Rodriguez dissenting) on the Stakeholder Committee's final meeting in late August 2006.

The Transportation Plan was accepted by the San Rafael City Council on September 18, 2006.

Summary of the Canal CBTP

The plan includes the following components:

- ☐ A Community Profile – a comprehensive analysis of the population and transportation characteristics of the Canal neighborhood.
- ☐ Relevant Studies and Reports – a thorough review of previous outreach, studies and plans related to transportation in the Canal.
- ☐ Community Outreach – a summary of the outreach activities by the Stakeholder Committee to hear from the neighbors about transportation issues, and to prioritize possible transportation improvements.
- ☐ Transportation Solutions – a prioritized list of 13 projects that will improve the ability of residents to move safely around the neighborhood and to travel efficiently to places outside the community.

The 13 recommended transportation solutions were reviewed and prioritized based upon project support, effectiveness in mitigating transportation gaps, and potential for implementation. The projects are prioritized as follows:

High Priority Projects

1. Adjustments to Bus Transit Service – Adjustments to transit service were implemented by MCTD in September 2006 including increased frequency and capacity of service, more direct service to Sir Francis Drake Blvd., North San Rafael and Mill Valley and more convenient service to Fairfax.
2. Crosswalk and Lighting Improvements – This solution would include the installation of crosswalks and enhanced lighting where needed.
3. Canal Crossing – A pedestrian/bicycle connection from the Canal Neighborhood to Downtown, San Rafael High School, Montecito Shopping Center and other locations north of the waterway would be provided. Initial studies would involve the evaluation of potential alternatives including various bridge designs, a tunnel, shuttle, or improvements to existing routes.
4. Safe Routes to School – Curb ramps, raised crosswalks and curb extensions will be constructed for access routes to Bahia Vista School in Fall 2006.
5. Bus Shelters – Additional bus shelters would be installed where feasible.
6. Canal Neighborhood Safety and Streetscape Improvement Project – This solution would involve the study of neighborhood traffic, circulation and safety hazards to identify and implement safety and streetscape improvements for bicycle and pedestrian travel within and to areas outside the neighborhood.

Medium Priority Projects

7. Highway Crossing – The highway crossing would provide a separated pedestrian/bicycle crossing of Hwy 580/Hwy 101 between the neighborhood and Andersen Drive.

8. 'Street Smarts' Program – This program utilizes public education to address the behaviors of drivers, pedestrians and bicyclists with advertising and focused community outreach.
9. Rides to School for Parents Program – This solution recommends a pilot program to provide transportation for parents of San Pedro Elementary School students to attend school events, parent conferences and for family emergencies.
10. Neighborhood Transportation Information Kiosk – The kiosk would provide information on transportation options available to the neighborhood including transit services, paratransit, 511 rideshare, Commuter Checks, 'Trips for Kids' after school and earn-a-bike programs, school buses, etc. The kiosk would be placed in a location central to the community.
11. Canalfront Paseo – The Paseo would provide pedestrian/bicycle access on both sides of the Canal waterway. Together with the Canal Crossing, the Paseo would provide access to Downtown, Montecito Shopping Center and other locations to the north as well as fill a gap in the San Francisco Bay Trail between Pickleweed Park and Pt. San Pedro Road.

Low Priority Projects

12. Modified Transit Fare to Downtown – This solution would provide a reduced transit fare for trips between the Canal Neighborhood and the San Rafael Transit Center. It would not affect the fare for trips requiring connection at the transit center.
13. Car Share Program – The car share program would provide subsidized hourly car rentals to the Canal Neighborhood for members who qualify for the program.

The highest priority project, the improved bus transit service, is scheduled for implementation this month.

With the acceptance of the Transportation Plan, staff will monitor and coordinate with San Rafael staff to secure grant funding to implement these recommended projects. For example, this summer ABAG awarded San Rafael \$20,000 in funding for a Canalfront Paseo and Canal crossing conceptual design plan. San Rafael staff is currently preparing an application to Caltrans for additional funding for this project, which will ultimately answer the questions, with the help of Canal residents, about the most effective and feasible walkway and crossing locations.

Recommendation

In summary, staff recommends that the TAM Board accept the Canal Neighborhood Community Based Transportation Plan, with special thanks to the Stakeholder Committee who enabled the process to go smoothly.

Attachments: Resolution 2006-17
Canal Community Based Transportation Plan

TAM RESOLUTION NO. 2006-17

RESOLUTION OF THE TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY OF MARIN (TAM) FOR THE ACCEPTANCE OF THE CANAL NEIGHBORHOOD COMMUNITY BASED TRANSPORTATION PLAN

WHEREAS, The Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) prepared the *Lifeline Transportation Network Report* in 2001 identifying transportation travel needs in 25 low-income communities throughout the San Francisco Bay Area, including two communities in Marin: the Canal Neighborhood in San Rafael and Marin City in unincorporated southern Marin; and

WHEREAS, MTC prepared the Environmental Justice Reports in 2001 urging local planning efforts in low-income communities throughout the region; and

WHEREAS, MTC launched the Community Based Transportation Planning Program in 2001 to provide funding to local Congestion Management Agencies (CMAs) to conduct local planning efforts in identifying transportation needs and solutions in the targeted communities; and

WHEREAS, TAM received a \$60,000 grant from MTC to prepare the Canal Neighborhood Community Based Transportation Plan; and

WHEREAS, TAM retained Wilbur Smith Associates to provide technical assistance for the preparation of the Canal Neighborhood Community Based Transportation Plan; and

WHEREAS, The Canal Neighborhood Community Based Transportation Plan was prepared with extensive community participation and inter-agency collaboration; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Transportation Authority of Marin hereby accepts the Canal Neighborhood Community Based Transportation Plan.

PASSED AND ADOPTED at a regular meeting of the Transportation Authority of Marin held on the 28th day of September 2006, by the following vote:

AYES:

NOTES:

ABSENT:

Steve Kinsey, Chair
Transportation Authority of Marin

ATTEST:

Dianne Steinhauser
Executive Director